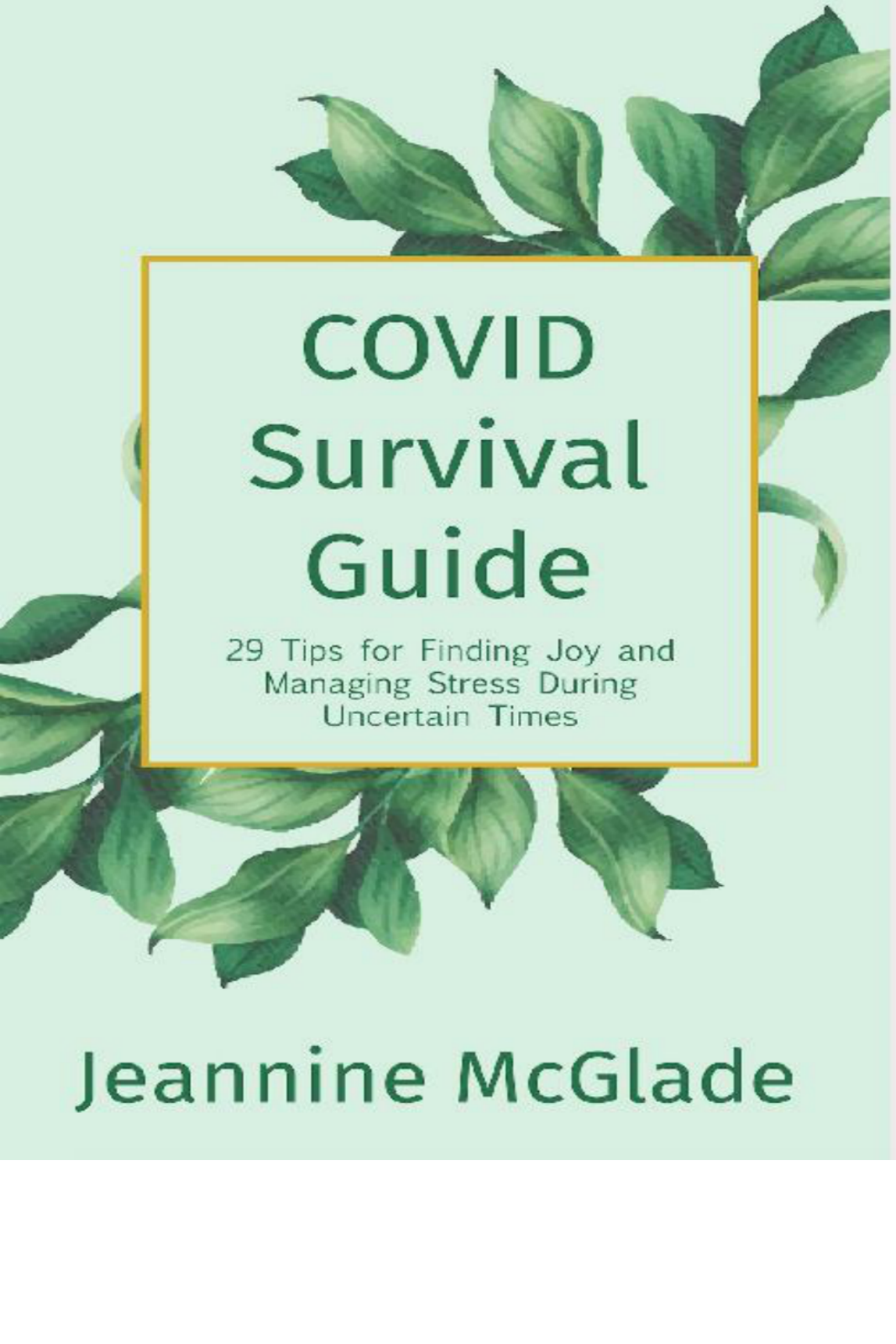


COVID Survival Guide: 29 Tips for Finding Joy and Managing Stress

McGlade, Jeannine

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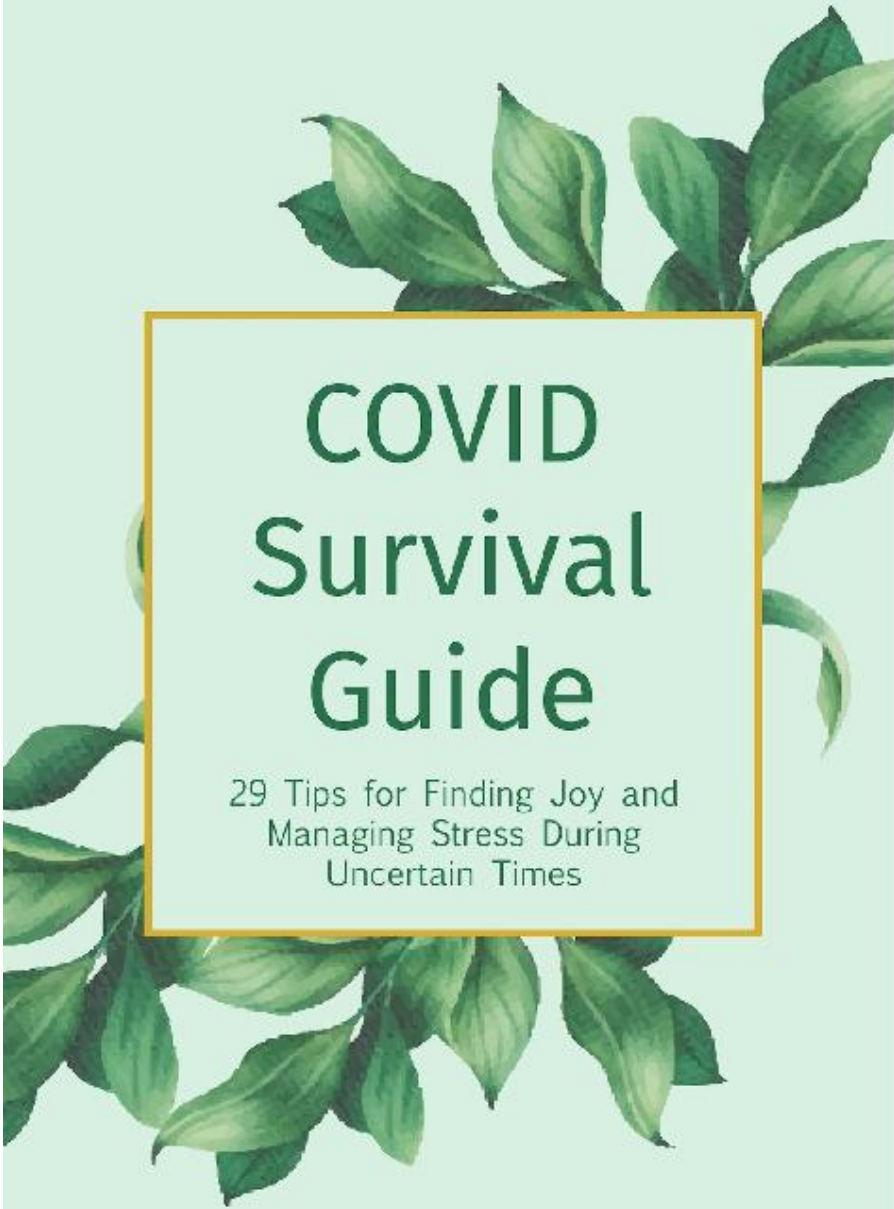
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The background of the cover is a light mint green. It is decorated with realistic-looking green leaves and branches. Some leaves are at the top right, some at the bottom left, and some at the bottom right, framing the central text area. The leaves have detailed veins and varying shades of green.

COVID Survival Guide

29 Tips for Finding Joy and
Managing Stress During
Uncertain Times

Jeannine McGlade

The cover features a light green background with a central white rectangular box outlined in a thin orange border. This box contains the title and subtitle. The title is in a large, dark green, sans-serif font, while the subtitle is in a smaller, dark green, sans-serif font. The entire composition is framed by a lush arrangement of green leaves, likely from a peace lily, which are positioned around the central box and extend towards the edges of the cover.

COVID Survival Guide

29 Tips for Finding Joy and
Managing Stress During
Uncertain Times

Jeannine McGlade



By Jeannine McGlade, M.A. RYT-200, Reiki Master

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Introduction:

We live in unprecedented times. Life is uncertain. Many of us are wondering when things will get back to “normal” or if it ever will be normal again. Some of us are fearful, full of “what if’s and why’s” and have so many questions that cannot be answered. Many people have lost their jobs, or their small businesses, some have lost loved ones to

this dreadful virus, and some have lost their way – what they always knew was true, that which was assumed would always be there, is no longer. Covid-19 has taken the world by storm and many of us are faced with such uncertainty and change that we aren't quite sure what to do with it.

As I write this from my home outside of New York City in the tiny hamlet of Palisades, NY in July of 2020, we've been in a modified state of living since March. Nearly 4 months of uncertainty, of "flattening the curve" by staying home, sanitizing our groceries, not gathering at the homes of friends or religious institutions, at sporting events, or at our children's end of year recitals or graduations or a loved one's funeral. We are wearing masks, staying 6 feet apart and wondering what the hell happened to our lives.

We go on social media or turn on the news and that makes us feel even worse. We are addicted to information because we are looking for something to give us hope, and keep informed on what's happening. But this only adds to our ennui, our anxiety, our uncertainty. With messages of fear rampant in the news, on social media, and even when talking to our neighbors and friends at a safe distance, we find ourselves even more worried, sad, uncertain and unsure how to act anymore.

But there is good news amidst the bad. The good news is knowing that as a human species we are strong. And while we don't always get things right, once we learn to adjust and adapt we move forward, more powerfully than before. And if you are honest with yourself and really think about it, life has always been uncertain. Nothing has been guaranteed. We just lived more fully inside the illusion that we had it all under control, that we were safe, that our jobs were secure and small businesses were going to be around for the long haul. The things that we thought we knew for sure, really were never 100% certain – it just felt that way. Maybe because it was the way it always had been – kids go to school in a classroom with a teacher, right? We commute to work, drive our car or take public transportation and work all day at the office, yes? We run our small businesses in our communities and serve our clients day in and day out knowing that we will do it again and return each day ready to go, n'est ce pas? We show up, work hard at our jobs and we will earn an income and are able to afford what we need of course, right?

Well, these taxing times are challenging some of the very assumptions we held as hard truths. But maybe, just maybe, there is more good that will come out of the hardship, the suffering, the sadness and the fear. What if you can come out of the unknown with a more robust

business or a new career or a new, reinvigorated relationship or better health? What if...why not?

My hope is that this book will help you find your way during this uncertain time – and any uncertain time you may ever face. Because the truth is, the principles are the same whether you are going through an unprecedented pandemic or your own internal, personal pandemic. My goal is to help you find ways to remind yourself that “this too shall pass” and while we are in the muck, we can still find the joy. While we are frazzled and scared, we can still find the peace. While we are sad and unsure, we can still find the happiness. We have the choice, as hard as it might be on some days – we all have that choice to choose how we will face that which is in front of us, one day at a time. *That* is the power of the human spirit. *That* is your power. And my hope is that this book will help you take that power back and unlock your greatest human potential because it is absolutely possible and it is only one thought away.

How this book is organized

In an effort to keep things simple and immediately implementable, this book is organized into 29 tips. You can quickly read each tip, decide if it resonates with you and if so, choose to immediately put that tip into action. If not, skip it and move on to the next. You certainly don’t have to read this book in order and if you’re like me, sometimes you need some direction or inspiration and want to just flip open your favorite book (I hope this becomes one of them) and open to a random page and the words written there are exactly what you needed to hear in that exact moment.

I’ve left black spaces for you to journal or jot down your thoughts about what you’ve read, any insights that it sparked or any ideas that came to you while you were reading and reflecting on the principles on each page. Or, when no thoughts or insights come and you just want to doodle. So, feel free to print this book and use it as your own.

I would love to hear from you about your own tips, any of the tips here that resonated with you or just your thoughts as you read and take action. Follow me on Instagram @jeannine.mcglade and sign up for my newsletter by going to www.jeanninemcglade.com .

So, now, let’s get on to the good stuff!!

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1 – Be Grateful

A state of gratefulness raises your vibration and the vibration of those around you. It's physiologically impossible to feel stressed when you are in a state of gratefulness. Even if you are struggling to find what to be grateful for because you feel so much hope is gone, be grateful for the fact that you get to wake up to another day; that you get to hear the birds singing outside; or that the sun still rises each and every day – even when you can't always see it through the clouds. That is life. The sun is still there but you have to trust in that truth when it's cloudy outside because you can't see the sun.

Being grateful is one of the most powerful energetic vibrations there is. Be grateful for the big things too – your kids, your home, your job, your significant other. And if you've lost your job or don't have a significant other at this moment, being in a state of gratefulness can attract to you that which you don't yet have in the physical world. Be grateful for the job that you will attract now that you are finished with the old job or the relationship you will attract now that you are free to be in one. Anything we want to manifest in our lives first starts in our thoughts and in our imagination.

So, just for today, be grateful for something – anything – big or small.

2 – Manage Your Stress

Stress – the non-stop, ever present pressures and demands of our world is challenging – especially during times that are unknown. Stress in and of itself is neither good nor bad, it's just energy. But how we perceive those pressures and demands and unknowns is what actually causes us distress. Stress is linked as a cause to some of the most debilitating diseases that we face in the world today. It affects our heart function, hormone levels, our nervous system, memory and thinking. It affects our immune system – that part of us that protects us from unwanted illnesses and viruses. When we are overwhelmed and feeling burned out or run down we are more susceptible to these unwanted illnesses, diseases, and viruses.

So, then, how do we tame stress? Well, that's a whole book in and of itself but you already learned one way (if you are reading this book in order!) – being grateful. As mentioned, it's impossible to feel stressed when we are in a state of gratefulness. Our beliefs, thoughts, attitudes and feelings affect whether we will see our current circumstances as good or bad and whether we go into fight or flight. You've heard about the saber tooth tiger and our cavemen (and women!) ancestors? When they faced a saber tooth tiger, their bodies responded in that emergency to either flee or fight – adrenaline kicks in and our ancestors outran or defeated that tiger. We still have this fight or flight inside of us whenever we feel stress yet our dangers are likely not coming face to face with that tiger, but instead prolonged worry, anger, fear and other low vibrational energies that keep our cortisol high and our stress levels elevated. So, clearly during these unknown times, we need to manage our stress so we can come out ahead of the stress – healthier, happier, and joyful.

So, some tips to immediately combat stress that you can do right now – get physical (do some sort of movement); take a power nap; take a deep breath and slow your breathing down; and change your thoughts – tune into what your predominant thoughts are and if they are negative, change it to something positive. And just keep doing that over and over again. Train your brain to change a negative thought immediately into a positive one. It works.

So, just for today, pick one tip to manage your stress in a way that works best for you.

3 – Meditate

You've no doubt heard of meditation. Maybe you even do it sometimes! But a regular daily practice of meditation, whether it's 20 minutes twice a day or 5-Minutes in the morning before you hop out of bed, is a great way to calm your mind and relax. Meditation is key to connecting with yourself - a higher force, God, the universe - whatever you prefer to call it. Quieting our minds, even for a few minutes each day is so beneficial to us on so many levels.

Calming down the never-ending "monkey mind" as we call it in yoga, helps us to gain control over our thoughts and sets us up to have a purposeful day - a day filled with calm and focus. And whether it's calm and focus, a connection to your higher self, or even helping with anxiety or PTSD, the myriad of health benefits are ours for the taking with an intentional meditation practice. And living in these unmatched times certainly calls for measures like meditation that will allow us to remind ourselves who we really are by going within and finding solace and peace in that space.

So, just for today, try a long or short meditation to calm your mind, relax your body and fuel your soul.

Check out my free podcast (available on Apple podcasts, Anchor, Spotify and pretty much anywhere you get podcasts) called [5-Minute Meditations](#) and get started meditating today!

4 – Take a Deep Breath

Rarely do we think of our breathing – we take it for granted that it just kind of happens. Unless we have an acute respiratory illness or conditions like asthma, etc. that impact our breathing, we don't give it much thought as it's mostly a subconscious activity. In fact, we breathe in and out roughly 20,000 times per day! As we breathe in, or inhale, we take in oxygen that literally feeds each and every cell in our body. As we breathe out, or exhale, we release carbon dioxide out of our body. When we take deep, full breaths in, we give our bodies fuel that we can use as energy.

Focusing on our breathing keeps us in the present moment and centers us. In times of stress or crisis, we can use deep diaphragmatic breathing to calm us down and keep stress at bay. What's more, if you are breathing deeply it is physiologically impossible to feel anxiety or stress. The two cannot co-exist in your body at the same time. Deep breathing gives us energy, dilutes stress and allows us to center ourselves in the present moment. Be sure to take a deep breath in through your nose and out again through your nose for optimal benefit. Something that is so easy, free, and is accessible to us all the time is one of the best tools you can use to feel good. So, the next time you are feeling anxious, need an energy boost or want to focus yourself in the present moment, take a deep breath.

So, just for today, take some deep breaths throughout the day to find your center, destress and get some energy!

5 – Connect with Others

Human beings are social beings – we want to (and need to) connect with others. According to the online blog by Harley Therapy, connecting is “a sense of being open and available to another person... as you feel they are open and available to you.” And while it might not be feasible to get together with people due to anything from social distancing guidelines in place to real physical distance, it doesn’t mean we can’t connect.

Give that friend who makes you laugh a call (or zoom so you can see his face!) or connect with like-minded groups on social media to see how others are dealing with their lives and uncertainty right now or how they are keeping positive in the shadow of the oh-so-pervasive worry that comes with feeling disconnected. With connection comes empathy and compassion – we listen to the other fully and we feel listened to, we have a shared experience that brings goodwill and we are in the moment without worrying about the past or the future. Focusing in on that other person, really engaging with them in these ways brings us closer and feeling more connected.

So, just for today, connect with the first person who comes to mind as you read this! *That* is the person you are meant to connect with today!

6 – Join a Cause

What are you passionate about? What is the thing you always said, “Well if I had more time, I’d help the world out with this?” Is it the environment? Is it medical freedom? Is it helping underprivileged youth? Is it helping animals? Veterans? People who have lost everything and need to start over? Whatever the issues are that mean the most to you, the things that get you to take a stand or to stand up for what you believe in, are important to you and you can be a voice in support of that cause. When you join in a cause and pledge to help in some way, you give strength to the cause, which builds momentum. Whether the support comes in the form of your time, your donations or your name to give more power and credibility to that cause, it shows that you are a champion and will be in some small (or large) way an advocate for what you believe in.

Any way that you can be a voice for something you believe in is always a good thing – especially when you can be a voice for others who can’t or don’t have the option of doing so themselves. Times that are trying, especially with what we face now in our world, ask us to step up and do something. Now is always the right time!

So, just for today, research and join a cause that you can get behind and endorse fully!

7 – Find a Hobby

Do you remember what you did as a child that gave you great joy? For me, it was horseback riding, ice skating, soccer and bike riding! And while I'm definitely not ready to run 90 minutes non-stop chasing after a soccer ball, I certainly can bike ride! I've taken it up again and I forgot how much I really love it! Another hobby that I had was making jewelry (hair clips and bracelets). I loved it. So, I've been gathering items to start making jewelry and make that my new hobby!

A hobby is anything that will bring you joy while you are engaged with it. If it brings major stress, it's not a hobby! In fact, hobbies tend to de-stress us and are really good for our mental health. Now that doesn't mean depending on what you choose as your hobby that there won't be an element of effort involved. But effort isn't necessarily stressful, it just might take a little push to give it a go! But once you do, it will be well worth it in the end. You'll find yourself more in the moment with your newfound (or old!) hobby and find yourself getting lost in it where time just seems to stand still and your troubles fade into the background!

So, just for today, find a hobby that gives you joy and helps you get lost in the moment!

8 – Check in With the Most Vulnerable

During any crisis, there are some who are more vulnerable than others. During this current pandemic (at the time of this writing), we know that older people are most at risk. Often the elderly already feel isolated and alone. Now is the time to check in with them to see how they are doing and stay connected. Write a letter (paper and pen, the old-fashioned way or if they are email savvy, send an email) pick up the phone, or if you can, go visit them (social distance visits, with masks will help keep them healthy while you visit). Send them a goody basket or small gift to let them know you are thinking of them. Something little can go a long way. Just to bring a smile to their face, even for a moment, will boost their immune system and give them some joy. And when you are focused on others and how you can be of service to others, you aren't worried about your own situation, which helps you in turn. So, it's a win-win for all!!

And it's not just the elderly – people who live alone can be vulnerable as well. So if you know someone living alone, connect with them. Check in. Call. Visit, if it's feasible. If not, use technology to touch base.

So, just for today, check in with someone who is vulnerable – because of their age, their circumstance or for any reason at all and let them know you care.

9 – Forgive Someone

Forgiveness. Feels like a tough pill to swallow sometimes, doesn't it? But when we remember that forgiveness is really about us, not the person who "done us wrong" we can more easily come to truly forgive. The reason it feels hard to forgive at times is that well, frankly, someone really *did* do us wrong. Maybe really, really wrong. Even so, we need to remind ourselves that forgiveness really isn't about them – it's about us. When we forgive someone else we do not, let me repeat, do not, condone their bad behavior. But, instead, we forgive so that *we* can feel lighter, move forward, not keep energy around a bad situation (yes, even the really, really bad ones) stuck in our bodies. We forgive so that we can live in the present (the only time we really have). Holding onto resentment, anger, hurt and pain only continues to hurt *us* – not the perpetrator.

So, think now about someone you need to forgive. It's probably the person that popped into your head as soon as you read the title of this tip. Maybe there's more than one person. Start with one, you can forgive someone else tomorrow.

So, just for today, forgive someone and feel the peace of that forgiveness on yourself!

10 – Create a Sense of Normalcy

Circumstances that deviate from the norm leave us with feelings of being unsure, not confident and generally uncomfortable. We are creatures of habit and when we can't do the routines and things that we would normally do, it leads to worry and a feeling of not knowing what to do – which leaves us at risk of getting completely immobile or stuck. When we feel we can't get into our normal groove, be productive like we used to be, have fun the way we did before or generally not be able to do the things we did before, that leaves us feeling helpless. And while we can all agree that doing something different from the norm is a great way to shake things up and keep life from getting stale, we've been shaken for months now and we are all yelling “uncle” to have it stop and get back to “normal.”

So, while we may never quite go back to the normal we had before this crisis, how can we define a new normal? What are the things you have control of? What are the things that you know for sure you can count on? The love of your child? What you put into your body? Whether you get exercise each day or meditate? Can you count on the fact that you can choose to take a deep breath when you feel anxious and squash the stress immediately?

When we find things that we can count on or have control of, it gives us a sense of peace and a sense of grounding. If we can find ways to embrace these things and make that our new normal, it gives us a sense of hope. When we have hope, we can make the current tough circumstances more bearable while at the same time envisioning a better future. There's a great prayer for this that you may have heard of, “God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; the courage to change the things that I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.” It's a go-to in times of uncertainty.

So, just for today, create a new normal by putting aside that which you cannot control and get back to normal, and take charge of what you *can* control and what you *can* change and move forward with hope.

11 – Try Something New

While normal is good and we need to remind ourselves what we can count on and control, it's also good to try something new. Something new that is fun, uplifting and brings us pleasure. Trying something new stretches our brain and keeps us thinking creatively! It allows us to see new connections that we may not have seen before and keeps us in the present moment since it is new to us!

So, what's something you've wanted to try that you have put off? Now that you have some extra time, what can you do with it? Try a new recipe? A new genre of a book or movie? A new hairstyle? A new exercise routine? A day trip somewhere you haven't been before? It doesn't matter what it is, so long as it is new to you and something you would find enjoyable.

So, just for today, try something new to get out of a rut!

12 – Sign Up for a Free Course

Being a lifelong learner, I LOVE taking courses on all sorts of topics. And now, with being at home even more, I'm finding so many different courses that are available for free or low-cost and I want to take them all! Think about what you'd love to learn and search online to see if there's a course for you! There are multiple platforms offering so many different content areas that you'll be sure to find the right one for you!

Over the past few months, I've taken a homeopathy course, weekly online yoga classes, and a mini-course on how to prune and dry lavender plants (never thought I'd do that!). I've learned some fun things and implemented many of them (I have dried lavender hanging in my kitchen as I write this!). Take a moment to think about what you'd like to learn, do an online search, and find the right course for you. It's waiting for you!!

So, just for today, sign up for a course on a topic you'd love to learn about!

13 – Do Yoga

I can't believe I left this for #13, because it's super important and will help you instantly feel better! In fact, when I was taking my yoga teacher training 7 years ago, I remember if I didn't have time to do yoga for an hour and a half, I would find just 10 minutes to drop down into some postures (asanas) and if I was feeling sad or stressed or just tight, that 10 minutes of yoga took it right out of me! It made me feel instantly happy.

Yoga is thousands of years old and while asana is only one facet of yoga, it is one that is easily assessable to all and the one that we know most about even if we are a complete beginner. Even if you are unable to get to the floor due to lack of mobility or have an injury, you can find chair yoga or restorative yoga classes that will be easy on your body and allow you the benefits of yoga that are so very helpful. Movement is so important for our physical as well as mental well-being. After just 6 – 8 weeks of yoga, you will change your physiology completely. You will notice you feel more mobile, you will get into postures more effortlessly and hold them longer, you will have more energy because you will be breathing through the sequences and bringing prana (energy) and oxygen to your cells and opening up your chakras (wheels of energy throughout our bodies). It's an amazing practice. And if you're resistant to yoga, you probably need it even more. It stretches and tones the body and massages different internal organs depending on the posture. After all your hard work in asana, you get to do some relaxation and integrate all the movement, stretching, toning and muscle building you've done. It's a wonderful practice and with millions of people around the world who swear by their weekly yoga class, it's worth giving it a try.

So, just for today, do some yoga – if you are new, find a beginner's class online (*I offer a FREE beginner's yoga class series twice a year. Send me a message via email at yogawithjeannine99@gmail.com if you are interested and I'll send you the zoom link!*)

14 – Tune in to Non-verbal Communication

Research shows that non-verbal communication is how 93% of our message comes through when we are communicating with others. That means that only 7% of what we say (the actual words we use) is delivering the message when we communicate. Non-verbal communication is everything *but* the words. So, it's facial expressions, tone of voice, mannerisms, sub-vocals (grunts, uh-huh, hmmm, etc.), speech tempo and the like. So much of the message we send gets sent through non-verbal means, so it's important that our non-verbals convey what we intend to communicate. Easier said than done, with this new world where masks and social distancing are becoming the norm.

As we continue to learn more about this COVID virus and what's best to do or not do, we need to be extra tuned in to these non-verbals. Especially now, while we wear masks, we need to ensure that we speak clearly and enunciate so people hear what we are saying, but we also need to make sure that our non-verbal communication is strong. Can you smile with your eyes? Make sure your tone is friendly and warm? Now, more than ever is when we have to turn it up a notch to make sure our messages go through.

So, just for today, tune into your own non-verbal communication and that of those to whom you talk. Do this and ensure that communication doesn't break down.

15 – Start a Business or Side Hustle

Ever dream of starting a new business? Have you always wanted to be your own boss? Or maybe out of necessity (job loss) you need to generate income and starting your own business is a way to do this. Whether it's out of desperation or inspiration, now is as good a time as any to start a business that brings you revenue and brings your skill and know-how to the world! Even if you're not ready to pull the trigger or you just want a side hustle and not a full-time gig yet, take some time to brainstorm the business of your dreams. What would you like to birth into this world? What skills, know-how, expertise, etc. do you have that you could bring to others? How might you serve others? What do you LOVE to do and want to share with others?

Start to think through these questions to come up with some ideas. Once you come up with some ideas (without judging or editing the ideas as you go – be sure to keep an open mind!) see what resonates for you from the list. Now I know during tough times it's not easy to pull forth the motivation needed to take something big like starting a business, but there is help out there for you. Small business associations, local and national organizations, friends, neighbors, family members who have started businesses and can give you some tips and to-dos (and not to dos) to get started. All you have to do is reach out and ask. And believe me, having been a small business owner for over 20 years now, I'm always asking questions and getting help in the areas where I have zero skill or expertise (eh-hem, accounting anyone?). So, don't be shy. Pick up a phone, search online, set up time to speak with someone who can help you get started!

So, just for today, jot down your thoughts on what business you'd like to create and take one step towards making it a reality!

16 – Play with Your Kids (or borrow 1 or 2)

It seems that the playful, imaginative world of our childhood is so very far away. And in times of stress, this distance feels even further. But our kids have a way of showing us how to live in the moment and participate in an imaginative world that comes alive right before their eyes.

I wrote about this extensively in my book, *Stimulated! Habits to Spark Your Creative Genius at Work* 10 years ago where my co-author, Andrew Pek and I shared 5 habits that sparked creativity. One of these five habits is playing. The sense of getting lost in what you are doing, experimenting, tinkering and just being playful is not an easy concept to embrace in the work world. But it is exactly this habit that helps us see things differently and come up with ideas we never would have thought of without it. This sense of playfulness is contagious if you can get out of your adult mind that is always more critical and cautious and move into your child's world – one of wonder and awe. Even just observing your kids playing is a great way to step out of the “adulting” world. But don't stop at just observation – jump in there right alongside your kids, roll up your sleeves and don't worry if you get dirty or the house gets messy, just have fun. If your kids are older and living less often in the imaginary world, play a board game. Laugh together, read jokes to one another. Just have some fun. These are shared memories that last forever. Think about your own precious moments of childhood – what makes those stand out for you? What made it special? Do this for your kids but also do it for yourself!

And if you don't have your own kiddos, borrow some! (Their parents will thank you!) Even for just a short time – and if you can't get together physically still, thank goodness for Zoom and Skype, and other ways of having a virtual playdate! The feel-good hormones created in just an hour or so of play will keep you feeling great long after you are done!

So, just for today, take a moment to get into the world of your child, be playful and forget your adult responsibilities for just a little bit!

17 – Move Your Body

We already talked about yoga – a great way to move your body (and one of my personal favorites). But of course, there are many ways to move your body and bring yourself energy to keep going! During times of stress, it's even more important to step away from the “have to do's” and make movement a priority. Take a walk, ride a bike, jump on your treadmill that's been holding your clothes before putting them back in your closet! Anything that will get you to move is a good thing. Put on your favorite tunes and dance! A friend of mine said that the best exercise is the one that you will actually do. So, it doesn't matter what kind, so long as you do something. Have fun with it.

Living during a pandemic doesn't lend itself to going to the gym necessarily (although in the NY area of the USA, gyms are starting to take appointments and limit the amount of people allowed in at a time) but so many are offering online versions of their classes – or even outdoor options! Peloton was at one point offering 90 days of ALL their classes online for free. You didn't even need the bike! So, there are many ways to move and groove and get your energy going! Just make sure it's something you enjoy and then make yourself do it. Show up for yourself. Spending this time for you will keep you in a better state of mind the rest of the day.

And the latest research shows you do not need to work out for hours and hours to make a difference. In fact, the opposite is true. Bursts, like 20 minutes or so, are better for you overall. So, do 20-minute bursts. At least one burst each day, but maybe you'll do more if you are up for it. But if you only get to one 20-minute burst, that's okay. You moved. You can celebrate that!

So, just for today, find a way to move your body!

18 – Don't Judge

When tensions are high we aren't always our best selves. So, if someone doesn't meet your expectations of what *you* think *they* should be doing, don't judge it. A good example right now is wearing masks. Depending on where you are in the world, this is something you've always done when you are sick out of respect for others you might come in contact with. For some of us, though, this is all very new. And some think it helps and others think it hurts. No matter where you stand on the mask issue, the best thing to do (for yourself and specifically for your immune system, which does *not* prefer stress) if you find yourself frustrated because someone else is doing something different from what you think is right for them (or what is right for you) is to just send them love and move on. Seriously. Maybe there's a reason they aren't wearing the mask. Maybe they forgot it or have a health condition that is better for them if they don't wear it. Who knows. But judging it or getting frustrated about it doesn't serve you and it won't make them do what you want them to do anyway!! So, send love, move on and trust that you might not have all the information. And this is true no matter what the issue is – pandemic or no pandemic. Anytime someone doesn't act in a way that you have expectations around, take a deep breath and send love. The stress is just not worth it.

So, just for today, catch yourself judging someone for whatever they might do (or not do) and send them love instead!

19 – Turn Off the News

We have access to news and information 24/7 – whether it's an alert from our smart phone or via the television, news is accessible all day, every day. And while it's great to know what's happening in our world, it's not great to be tied to this all of the time. The fact is, fear sells. And what you see on the news or read in your feed is what people want you to hear, see, or read. That doesn't mean it's not factual or important (although it doesn't necessarily mean it IS factual or important). Point is, get your news and move on with your day. And definitely wait until you've had some time in the morning to just connect with yourself. If we wake up and the first things we do is look to our phones, social media, or the news, we will be overcome with all the "bad" going on or other people's opinions that might or might not agree with ours. All of this creates undue stress. Of course, we have to be informed, but that's not the point. We can get informed and then get out of the treadmill of constant fear-based, bad news bombarding us!

Give yourself at least an hour to get up in the morning and be free from that worry and at least an hour before bed, same idea – give yourself time to relax and not watch the bad stuff so you can sleep better.

So, just for today, take a break from the non-stop 24/7 fear-based news!

20 – Get Some Rest

According to some estimates, nearly 30% of the world suffers from some form of sleep disturbance each and every night – stealing away precious regenerative time for our bodies. I know I've suffered from nights where I wake up and can't go back to sleep or go into bed bone tired and stare at the ceiling with sleep completely eluding me – and it's frustrating!! Getting adequate rest is linked to feeling healthier, happier, and logically, more energetic! Shutting off electronics at least an hour before we go to sleep, using our beds for sleeping, not binge-watching our favorite Netflix original in our bed (and right before trying to sleep), and going into bed a little earlier to just relax are key to starting the night off right.

According to some experts, our best sleep occurs before midnight, so if you are a night-owl, you might want to start thinking about getting to bed earlier as well. But, that said, more important than going to sleep before midnight (according to these same experts) consistency of sleep (when you sleep, how long you sleep, etc.) is more important than going to sleep before midnight. Dark, cooler rooms tend to help us sleep better and noise machines (or fans!) can be little miracles for those of us who are night-wakers who can't fall back asleep. Before I go to sleep, I make sure to leave a pencil and paper next to my bed so I can write down thoughts when I wake up (not sure what the experts would say about that!) but I do know that if I get the thoughts down, I feel like I don't have to get up and start my day right then and there in order for me to remember what comes to mind in the middle of the night. I know I wrote it down, I can let my mind rest and get back to sleep relatively easily.

So, just for today, get into bed a little earlier than normal, shut off your phone or electronics an hour before you hit the hay (put them out of your room altogether if possible) and do some deep breathing to help you drift off (and stay drifted!) peacefully!

21 – Spend Time in Nature

When there's not a lot to do (because you can't move around the way you did before) or if you are just tired of staring at the same four walls, get out and about! Nature has always been a respite for weary souls. Stressed or not so stressed, nature has a way of taking you back to your center. A walk in a park. A jog in the woods. Looking for sea shells at the beach. Heading to the river to watch the ships. A walk in your neighborhood to say a socially distant hello to your neighbors. Star gazing at night. Whatever speaks to you, get out into nature. Appreciate the trees, the grass, the sand, the water, the stars...just take it all in and enjoy the moment. Being in nature reduces your blood pressure, calms your mind and helps you feel connected to something bigger than yourself.

When my family is at our home by the ocean, we often spend a few evenings laying some blankets on the deck and watching the stars. We look for shooting stars, check out the planets, the moon and the milky way. It's awe-inspiring and it is precious time with each other that we will always hold in our hearts. Being in nature also reminds us that the same energy that created the trees, the moon, the water, etc., also created us. And that even during imperfect times, it is all still perfect. And no matter what our worries are, that it is all working out for our highest good. As Gabrielle Bernstein's book title beautifully states, "the universe has your back." So, remember that and spend some time in nature.

So, just for today, find a few minutes where you can get into nature and just take it all in. And don't forget to breathe.

22 – Eat Right

When we are under stress or just not motivated, it's hard to remember the basics of eating right at times. Eating right is so important for keeping not only our bodies functioning optimally, but also our minds. Now, everyone is different and has different needs and such in terms of diet, maybe even allergies, so you have to know what works for you and for your body. So, while this is not a diet book or anything close and should not replace any advice you might get from your nutritionist or your doctor, it's important to remember a few basics. First, is tuning into your body to know what *feels right* for you or not.

Now, I'm originally from Brooklyn, NY and I have to tell you pizza is my absolutely favorite food in the world!! But I also know that I don't always feel my best after I eat pizza – especially if I indulge in more than I should! So, the next time you eat – anything – tune into your body to see how you feel. Often we are on autopilot when it comes to what we eat. We aren't tuned in while we are eating to see when we are really full and we certainly aren't tuned in after to see how we feel. Or we are stressed and we go for the comfort food (that is usually not the healthiest for us) or feel we don't have time to make a home cooked meal so we grab fast food on our way home from work. And while grabbing take out once in awhile isn't awful and our favorite comfort foods (my Dad's mashed potatoes and of course, pizza! are my go-tos!) in moderation are fine, but if I make poor choices day in and day out, it will one day catch up with me. So, the first step is just being aware, or conscious, of the choices we are making and tuning in to how we feel after we make these choices. And depending on how we feel after, we can start to know what makes us feel good and what makes us feel bad. Pretty simple!

So, just for today, try adding something healthy to what you normally eat. Add a salad if you are having take out. Add a vegetable if you are eating pizza. And start to tune into how you feel after you eat certain foods. You might even keep a journal or log to track how you are feeling based on what you are eating. You might be surprised to see a pattern form and this will give you the information you need to make changes around the foods you eat.

23 – Stay Hydrated

Just as we should eat right and tune into how we are feeling after we eat certain foods, staying hydrated is key to a healthy life and de-stressing ourselves! Most of us are dehydrated and instead of grabbing water, we reach for food because we are getting signals that we are hungry when, in fact, we are actually dehydrated.

According to some research, 75% of all Americans (and I would guess the results aren't too dissimilar around the world) are chronically dehydrated. Yikes!!! Think about what happens to a piece of over-ripe fruit that loses its water. It shrivels up and dies!! Now, think about your organs...without adequate water, they shrivel up and do not function optimally. Experts say to drink half of your weight in ounces of water. So, if you weigh 150 pounds, that would mean you need to drink 75 ounces of water each day. It's amazing when you start to do this! Not only will you feel better and eat less, but you will likely lose a few pounds because the water you are drinking is filling you up *and* flushing toxins away!! Win-win! Even if you do not need to or want to lose weight, you want to get adequate water into your body and stay hydrated!

So, just for today, start drinking more water to keep yourself hydrated. And don't feel you have to start with half your body weight in ounces, but start with more than what you drink now and start feeling great!

24 – Mind Your Thoughts

I could write a whole book on this one and maybe one day I will! Our thoughts are so powerful. Our thoughts literally create our future. Have you ever eavesdropped on your thoughts? Spend a few minutes tuning into what you are thinking most of the time. Is it, “I don’t feel good, or that’s not fair, or why me?”, or any talk that is negative in nature? Or are your thoughts more, “this will work, I feel good, I will get it done” or talk that is more positive in nature?

The thoughts we tell ourselves are what we come to believe about ourselves, about those around us and about our lives in general. While bad things happen and people may disappoint us or whatever the case (Corona virus situation anyone??!!) we can choose our thoughts. We can choose how we will respond to the circumstances. We can choose whether we will grow from something or we will be defeated by it. Start tuning into the thoughts you think. And when you hear yourself telling yourself a defeatist thought, negative thought or a thought that keeps you tethered to the past or to past experiences, tell yourself an opposite thought or a thought that moves you into the direction of the future you want to create. The life that you have created right now is based on the thoughts you had in the past. So, if you like what you see in your life, keep that going and continuing thinking the way you’ve been thinking. If you don’t, start by changing your thoughts so you can change your life.

So, just for today, tune into your thoughts and keep the good ones and throw out the bad ones. Create your best future self by thinking the best thoughts in the present.

25 – Clean a Closet

While this may not be as inspirational as some of the other tips, it will help you feel good. I promise!! We all have that one closet (or junk drawer or some pile!) that needs our attention. So, it's time to get to it! Make the time to get into your closet and find the things you don't wear, or don't use and donate them or get rid of them. Did you know when it comes to clothes (and other things, but let's stick to that for a moment) that we tend to wear the same 20% of our wardrobe and the other 80% we never or rarely wear? So, while you may want to keep certain pieces, it's likely that you can get rid of most of your current wardrobe and not miss a thing! And donating it will help someone else who can really use what you don't wear! So, a win-win for sure. Or how about that closet with tools, or a garage filled with junk you don't need? The point of this tip is to declutter the space around you so that you don't have your mind cluttered by it. You will get peace of mind when your space, your closets, and your junk drawers are clean and organized!

So, just for today, pick one drawer, one closet, one part of a room or the garage and start to go through it. Don't feel like you have to do it all in one shot – don't stress with this – just start small and you will feel good that you started!!

26– Journal

Research shows that the most successful, creative people journal at least 10 – 30 minutes each day. Journaling helps us get our thoughts, ideas, frustrations and such onto paper so that it doesn't stay cluttered in our minds. When you journal, you can get rid of any negative thoughts – getting them on paper and getting them out of your mind. An effective habit for mental and emotional health. It's an opportunity to encourage yourself, provide the platform for positive talk and writing down your desires, fears, dreams, and goals in a safe place for your eyes only. Usually it takes a few minutes of writing to get to the good stuff, so allow yourself at least 10 minutes to do it (more if you can!) and just start writing. If you don't know where to start, write the date, a little bit about your day and why you felt like journaling today. Or ask yourself a prompting question. Here are a few to start with:

- What is my hope for the day (or my life)?
- What do I want to accomplish in my life?
- Who do I need to forgive right now and why?
- What situation is bothering me that I need to do something about but don't know how to start?
- What is my next step?
- How am I feeling today?
- Where are the top three places I want to travel someday?
- If I had unlimited resources (money, etc.) what would I do?
- When I was young, I loved to _____. What was it about this that I loved?

So, just for today, grab a notebook, piece of paper or special journal and start writing!

27 – Write a Book (or at least start)

So now that you are journaling every day and thinking about your goals and dreams, maybe writing a book is one of those dreams! I always say that each of us has at least one book inside of us. Something we experienced that we want to talk about. Something that we learned that we can help others with. A creative story we want to tell. A memoir. Whatever it is that is inside you that you want to tell, go ahead and start telling it. Write a little every day. Set objectives and make a plan that you can follow. Write in your free time (What? No free time? Get up 15 minutes earlier than you usually do and start writing or typing!). Write in between job interviews. Write during your lunch break. Anything that we really, really want to do, we can find the time to do it – it's usually just a matter of managing or prioritizing our time and giving ourselves permission to take that time. Often, it's the motivation that we are lacking. And if you don't want to write a book, that's okay too. What is it that you wish to create in your life? Is there a story you want to tell or a creative project you want to take on? Just do it. Review your journal for clues to find out what is important to you if you aren't sure. Start there. Or ask a trusted friend/family member what they think. You may get some good ideas!

So, just for today, think of the creative project you'd like to take on or the book you could write. What story would you tell? And start to tell it.

28 – Focus on Self-Care

Self-care – defined as the act of attending to one’s physical or mental health – is something that everyone can do, doesn’t need to cost any money and can be (should be!) done on a daily basis. When we take care of ourselves – a walk in nature, a warm bath, a cup of tea, or just doing something we love to do (art, reading, exercise, writing, caring for others, cooking, knitting, etc.) it not only helps us feel good in the moment we are doing it, but is critical for our long-term well-being.

When we feel good about ourselves, how we look and feel, how we spend our precious time, we are attending to ourselves. We are investing in ourselves. If you’ve ever taken a trip on a plane, one of the things that the flight attendants (or the recording!) tells you during the safety presentation is to put the oxygen mask on *yourself* first, *then* to put it on your child or someone who needs your help. If you don’t have oxygen for yourself, you won’t be much help to someone else. So, putting the oxygen mask on *you first* gives you the ability to help others. Think of self-care as your oxygen mask. You don’t have to be 35,000 feet in the air to put your oxygen mask on first.

So, just for today, put the oxygen mask on yourself and take some time to invest in self-care. Start small if you have to, but put it onto your to-do list just like any other task and make it a priority.

29 – Be Extra Kind (especially now)

Kindness is often lacking in today's busy world. Where email and social media muscles make people say things they would NEVER say in person, it's easy to hide and hit send. Especially now, when much of the world seems divided, kindness is the currency that will unite us all again.

So, when you are out and about, even with a mask on during these covid times, be extra kind to those you bump into. If they can't see your smile, give a friendly hello. When you see someone who needs help, or is struggling – physically or emotionally, don't be afraid to help. So many people are under tremendous stress right now and your friendliness and kindness might be the thing that gives them hope again. You can't go wrong with being kind. Wayne Dyer was quoted as saying, "It's better to be kind than right." Couldn't agree more – especially during uncertain times, a little kindness can go a long way.

So, just for today, circulate kindness – be extra friendly and kind to those you know and the strangers you bump into.

Thank You

Thank you, reader for reading the tips in this book. I truly hope that you will take what resonates for you and implement it into your life immediately. Forgive yourself if you are not perfect every day, forgive yourself if you forget what you intended, forgive others if they don't meet your expectations. Step forward into the unknown world with hope, with joy, with trust and with love. With love all things are possible and with trust you know the universe is conspiring to bring you exactly the lessons you need to grow. And has your back.

And as I was writing this book, I noticed that, not by design, at the end of each chapter, I was asking you to do something "just for today." It reminded me of a passage that my mother showed me years ago that she found with her late mother's belongings. It's the perfect reminder of getting through just one day at a time and the truths reflected in each of the statements will keep us grounded and centered.

So, I leave you with this passage in the hopes that it will help you do what you need to do for the best life you can live...just for today.

Namaste.

Jeannine

Just for Today

Just for today I will try to live through this day only, and not tackle all my problems at once. I can do something for twelve hours that would appall me if I felt I had to keep it up for a lifetime.

Just for today I will be happy. This assumes to be true what Abraham Lincoln said, that “Most folks are as happy as they make up their minds to be.”

Just for today I will adjust myself to what is, and not try to adjust everything to my own desires. I will take my “luck” as it comes, and fit myself to it.

Just for today I will try to strengthen my mind. I will study. I will learn something useful. I will not be a mental loafer. I will read something that requires effort, thought and concentration.

Just for today I will exercise my soul in three ways: I will do somebody a good turn, and not get found out; if anyone knows of it, it will not count. I will do at least two things I don’t want to do – just for exercise. I will not show anyone that my feelings are hurt; they may be hurt, but today I will not show it.

Just for today I will be agreeable. I will look as well as I can, dress becomingly, keep my voice low, be courteous, criticize not one bit. I won’t find fault with anything, nor try to improve or regulate anybody but myself.

Just for today I will have a program. I may not follow it exactly, but I will have it. I will save myself from two pests: hurry and indecision.

Just for today I will have a quiet half hour all by myself and relax. During this half hour, sometime, I will try to get a better perspective of my life.

Just for today I will be unafraid. Especially I will not be afraid to notice what is beautiful and to believe that as I give to the world, so the world will give to me.

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